



Information and Communication Technologies  
For Development (ICT4D) Program Area

Annual DPA Report to the Board

Richard Fuchs - Director

Program and Partnership Branch  
October 2001

## ACRONYMS

ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
AfDB	African Development Bank
ASRO	Regional Office for Southeast and East Asia
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CCIM	Centre's Committee for Information Management
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CTL	Closing the Loop
CSPF	Corporate Strategy and Programming Framework
DANIDA	Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
DFID	Department for International Development
DGIS	Director General for International Cooperation (The Netherlands)
DPA	Director of Program Area
ENRAP	Electronic Networking for Rural Asia/Pacific
ESARO	Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LACRO	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MERO	Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PI	Program Initiative
PBDD	Partnership and Business Development Division
PO	Program Officer
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
PPB	Program and Partnership Branch
RO	Research Officer
ROSA	Regional Office for South Africa
RX	Resource Expansion
SARO	Regional Office for South Asia
SID	Special Initiatives Division
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMC	Senior Management Committee
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
TL	Team Leader
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNF	United Nations Foundation
WARO	Regional Office for Western Africa
WBI	World Bank Institute

## **Contents**

### **i. Executive Summary**

#### **1. Program Area Overview**

#### **2. Review of Current Activities**

##### **2.1 Program Initiatives**

##### **2.2 Secretariats**

###### **2.2.1 Bellanet**

##### **2.3 Corporate Project**

###### **2.3.1 G8 Dot Force**

###### **2.3.2 Institute for Connectivity in the Americas**

###### **2.3.3 PAN Americas**

###### **2.3.4 World Economic Forum-Digital Divide Supervisory Committee**

#### **3. Corporate Learning – Closing the Loop**

#### **4. Conclusion – The Way Forward**

#### **5. Annexes**

##### **A – Acacia**

##### **B - PAN Asia Networking**

##### **C - Bellanet**

##### **D – Digital Opportunity Task Force (Dot Force)**

##### **E – Institute for Connectivity in the Americas**

##### **F – World Economic Forum – Digital Divide Supervisory Committee**

##### **G – Learning and Evaluation Action Program (LEAP)**

## **i. Executive Summary**

The Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D) Program Area has longstanding roots at IDRC. Since its inception in 1970, IDRC has had an active Information Sciences and Systems program mix. In 1999 this came to be integrated within a new Program Area. The Director of the Program Area, Richard Fuchs, began his duties with IDRC in January 2001.

The Information and Communications Technologies for Development issue has been on the Board agenda in both March and June 2001. In March, the Board gave approval to the research themes presented and discussed with management that prospectuses be prepared for the Acacia and PAN Program Initiatives. In June, the new Institute for Connectivity in the Americas was presented and discussed by the Board of Governors.

The ICT4D submissions before the Board at this meeting include the Director's Program Area Report, prospectuses for Acacia and PAN Asia and, for information purposes, a Corporate Project Description for PAN Americas. The Director's Program Area Report also serves as a Context and Introduction for the Prospectuses before the Board of Governors.

The "Digital Divide" has recently received much greater visibility as an area in which development cooperation and assistance is required. The IDRC approach to this issue is based on the twin goals of equality of access and the promotion of information economy opportunities within the developing world, as specified in the Corporate Strategic Program Framework (CSPF).

IDRC's programs in this area include a recognition that special measures need to be taken to ensure developing world participation in the social, cultural and economic opportunities which these technologies portend. At the same time a regional approach is used to ensure that the globalizing impacts of these technologies engender and build diversity, rather than fortifying cultural and economic hegemony.

The regional approach which has been adopted by the Centre includes custom strategies that are based on differing regional circumstances. These include "pre-market" situations (Africa), circumstances where there are compelling disparities between urban and non-metropolitan communities (Latin America) and regions where there are dramatic differences between the capacity of countries to benefit from these technologies (Asia). While the ICT4D programming is regionally specific, it is shared and exchanged within the context of the overall Program Area through a variety of mechanisms. These include the active *ICT4D Futures* listserv, joint staff meetings, planned staff exchanges and cross Program Initiative research collaborations. This is a major advantage of the Program Area modality which has been adopted by the Centre.

Along with its active Acacia and PAN Asia Program Initiatives, and the PAN Americas Corporate Project, IDRC has many other mechanisms of participation in this sector. IDRC serves as the Co-Chair of the G8's Digital Opportunities Task Force (DotForce). With Canada assuming the role of President of the G8 in 2002, this will become an even more active area for

the Centre in the coming months. The President of IDRC also serves as the Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum “Digital Divide” Supervisory Committee. The Director of the Program Area serves as the “sherpa” to the President in these foregoing matters.

As well, the ICT4D program area has recently sponsored research on the relevance of applying ICTs to assist with the HIV/Aids pandemic. This is being undertaken in collaboration with the Governance, Equity and Health Corporate Project at the Centre. This is another response to the G8 and DotForce actions emanating from the Summit in Genoa in July 2001.

Bellanet is a Secretariat which falls within the responsibility of the Director of the Program Area as well. Its original core activities of providing technology based support to the international development community has broadened considerably. More and more of Bellanet’s focus is on mechanisms, strategies and processes to promote knowledge management and sharing within the development community. CIDA, SIDA, DANIDA and IDRC all provide support to Bellanet which will host a meeting of its Steering Committee in early winter 2001/2002.

The ICT4D Program Area has engaged in a variety of “Closing the Loop” activities with Acacia, PAN Asia and PAN Americas. As well, PAN Asia and PAN Americas have initiated an innovative gender mainstreaming approach which will increase the consideration of this important issue in all ICT projects in which the Centre becomes involved.

The prospectuses before the Board of Governors call for second generation Program Initiatives within Acacia and PAN Asia. Given the emergence of the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA), PAN Americas will be established as a Corporate Project in order for it to be “twinned” with the ICA. Both ICA and PAN Americas, however, will fall under the management direction of the Director for the Program Area, in close collaboration with the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. After two (2) years, a decision will be made whether to merge PAN Americas with the ICA or to return it as an element of a Program Initiative within ICT4D.

The longstanding IDRC role as an innovator in the area of ICT4D’s will receive more support and, concomitantly, will come under far greater scrutiny in the next 4 years. In previous years, IDRC was often in a small minority of organizations that included information and related technologies as a component of their development programming. With the DotForce and other related initiatives, many other organizations are adopting this approach. Accordingly, IDRC is being expected to play an even greater partnership role within the international community as more organizations are entering the field and gaining experience in this sector. Among IDRC’s challenges will be to continue to innovate and engage in effective applied research programs at the same time as it forms partnerships with both existing and new international and bilateral organizational initiatives.

## **1. Program Area Overview**

### **ICTs in the New Millenium: Geography Matters**

“Everywhere we look for examples, ladies and gentlemen, there are incredibly powerful geographic factors at play which are barely noted, at least in our professional discourse.....You can look at 500 recent papers on economic growth and 497 of them won't even mention geography once.”<sup>1</sup>

Space and place matter. Canadians, more than most people, know this. Our identities, our prospects and how we see the world have very much to do with the regions we inhabit. For most of the world's population, where they live, the geography with which they identify, defines much of who they think they are and how they selectively perceive their world. As Jeffrey Sachs illustrated in his presentation to the Board of Governors in March 2001, space and geography are fundamental underpinnings of development challenges, opportunities and prospects.

Yet the world is an increasingly global place, a place where people, communities and institutions know about one another sooner, rather than later. We now live in a world where virtual networks often extend much further than interpersonal ones and where network interests have real meaning in social and economic life. As information and communications technologies accelerate the “miniaturization” of the world, where we come from, the geography with which we identify, have even more importance.

In a world that is virtually “shrinking,” globalization need not be synonymous with homogeneity. Worldliness need not disrespect local wisdom. Knowledge development can mean diversity. The ICT4D Program Area and the prospectuses that we submit are organised upon these values.

The ICT4D programming and the staff who help build and deliver it, are based on two fundamental understandings. First, the developing world should not be bypassed by the Information Economy. The regions, communities and people with whom we work have much to contribute to the knowledge and network economy. They also can be substantial beneficiaries of the enabling impacts that ICTs have on health, education, governance, employment and enterprise.

The process of human, social and subsequent economic progress associated with the application of ICTs seldom, if ever, occurs in a straight line on a continuum. When we argue, as increasing numbers now do, that ICTs can beneficially affect poverty outcomes, we mean this at individual, micro-social, cultural and eventually economic levels. The ICT4D research programs will help to provide insight into just how social and economic development, relating to these technologies occurs within divergent developing world contexts. The Government of Canada's recent Initiative on the New Economy<sup>2</sup> underscores that very little is actually known about how the

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Sachs, Special Presentation to IDRC Board of Governors, March 28, 2001, p.6. While much of Sach's presentation is open to question and debate, the notion that geography and “place” are important development correlates remains relevant.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.sshrc.ca](http://www.sshrc.ca)

Knowledge Economy operates, and what it portends in the developed world, much less within a developing world circumstance.

The teacher who can teach in the local language from a CD-ROM. The student who learns more quickly and has tools to satisfy her curiosity more quickly. The nurse who learns about treatment plans for HIV/AIDs patients in their later stages from a chat room. The small business that establishes to train people in using computers. The telecentre that gets outsourced from its incubation stage and employs 3 people. All of these are early forms of what eventually becomes a national information industry. The broader the base of skills, experience and application, the more the entire society can benefit from the social and economic changes wrought by ICTs.

The ICT4D mission, as described in the Corporate Strategic Program Framework<sup>3</sup> (CSPF), of supporting locally relevant information economy opportunities is derived from this. The information economy could conceivably bypass all but a slim segment of people in the developing world. We intend for our applied research and demonstration projects to help forestall this eventuality.

The second mission for ICT4D as described in the CSPF refers to providing “equitable and sustainable access” to ICTs. We understand “access” to go well beyond the simple establishment of Internet Points-of-Presence (POPs). While this is also part of our mission, as has been successfully demonstrated by PAN Asia in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Mongolia and Bhutan, it is really just the beginning. “Access” also means the availability of skills for people and content that is relevant, constructive and locally understood.

The regionally diverse ICT4D Program Initiatives have already helped our research partners accomplish this. PAN Americas has helped the ICT community learn about how ICTs need to be “appropriated” within the community. The workstation and dial-up facilities at the telecentre are simply not enough. They need to be “socialized” and brought to the segments of the community that can most beneficially adopt and deploy them to address the circumstances relating to poverty. And there are other dimensions to this as well, as Acacia has clearly demonstrated. If ICTs are really going to amplify diversity, the content that travels the telephone lines has to become digitally available in local languages. In Uganda, teachers, curriculum developers and students are experiencing the benefits of this through CurriculumNet.

### **Developing World “E”-Markets**

The ICT4D approach to social and economic development understands that “geography matters.” Since 1994 the ICT4D program strategies have been based on either regions or countries. Acacia has been a sub-Saharan program based on host Acacia “strategy” countries. We are now proposing that it become pan-African, incorporating North Africa. PAN has always been, *de facto*, segmented into two regions: PAN Asia and PAN Americas. We are now proposing, with the advent of the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas, that this segmentation be formalized,

---

<sup>3</sup> IDRC, IDRC in a Changing World: Program Directions 2000-2005, March 2000. p. 28

*de jure*, in a separate Program Initiative for PAN Asia and a Corporate Project for PAN Americas.

Our reasons for incorporating geography into how we approach our work go beyond administrative and operational convenience.<sup>4</sup> Our experiences in Africa, Asia and the Americas have taught us lessons about the different development requirements relating to ICTs in each region. For want of a better word or concept, we organize these observations around the notion of the “E”-market.

Information and communication technologies, or ICTs, like most other technologies, are not neutral. They are introduced within differing social, cultural and economic contexts. And they can be introduced for very different reasons. For example, when the first Information Society and Development (ISAD) conference (the precursor to the Global Knowledge Summits) was held in South Africa in 1996, the only institutions there that had well developed data networks were the military/police establishment and the banks. In the twilight days of apartheid, ICTs had been “appropriated” by institutions that were part of the problem, not part of the development solution.

Within ICT4D, when we refer to the concept of an “E-market,” we intend a broad, pluralistic and divergent set of uses for ICTs. Some of these uses are pre-commercial, some are institutional (as in health, education and governance), and some are based on consumer and business commercial foundations. Our understanding of the word “market” goes beyond the balance-sheet, although it does include this form of calculating costs and benefits. An example may be useful.

In Acacia and PAN Asia, there have been considerable investments by IDRC in supporting the development of telecentres<sup>5</sup> in what might best be described as “early” or “pre-” market circumstances. The social investments that were made by IDRC, often with partner organizations,<sup>6</sup> were the first such ICT investments of any kind. They were well ahead of any reasonable and purely commercial expectation for a rate of return. If these social investments hadn’t been made, it is unlikely that eventual commercial services would have developed, at least within the time-frame that the IDRC initiatives fostered. We consider these types of social investments as *de facto* elements of the marketplace. They help to build awareness, foster skills and create demand to the point where purely commercial services develop sooner, rather than later.<sup>7</sup> And most importantly, they entrench ICTS, and the enabling effects they portend, within segments of the community that benefit the poor. They also build skills within socially effective institutions, organizations and people that provide for an enduring and sustainable effect.

---

<sup>4</sup> Administrative and operational convenience does, however, have its benefits. For example, most of the international agencies with which we seek to collaborate are also organized on a regional basis. These include CIDA, DFID, UNDP, IDB, World Bank et. al.

<sup>5</sup> The same can be said for the “social investments” in the first ISPs in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Mongolia and Bhutan. These were financed largely through PAN Asia and have helped to accelerate the development of a nascent private-sector Internet market.

<sup>6</sup> For example, IDRC collaborated with UNESCO and the International Telecommunications Union in the development of Multi-Purpose Community Telecentres (MCTs) in Uganda, Mozambique and Timbuktu.

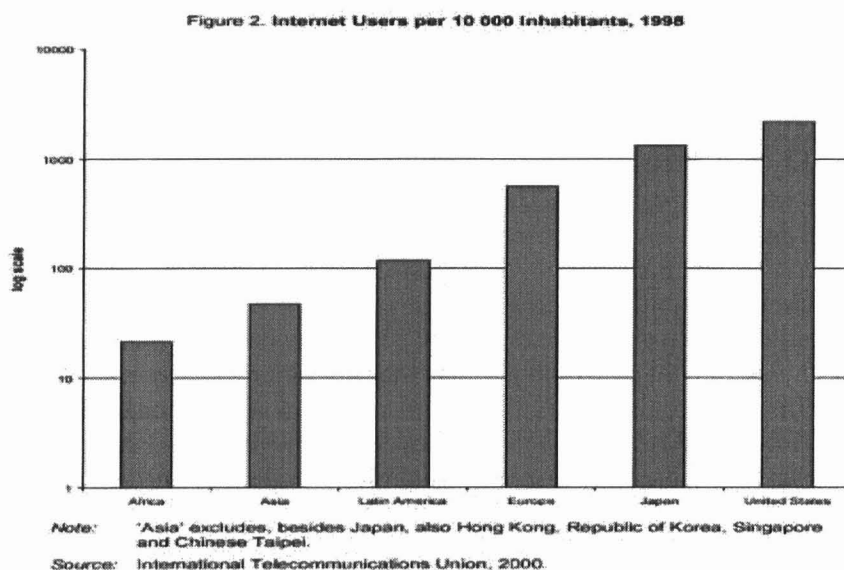
<sup>7</sup> Moreover, what happens in the second generation after these early public-sector and NGO digital pioneers is an important element of our prospectuses.



Lester Thurow, the former Director of MIT's Sloane School of Management and Senior Economic Advisor to U.S. President Jimmy Carter, described this pre-market, social investment function, as follows:

*"Capitalist infrastructure can only be built behind or slightly ahead of the market. . . . The Internet could not have been privately financed, the usage wasn't there, would take twenty years to develop . . . But, in the end, a social investment in infrastructure provided the means for developing an exciting set of new private industries."*<sup>8</sup>

What Thurow is describing is the fact that, in the North, there was considerable social investment in the development of the Internet for almost three (3) decades before a commercial market for these services developed. While the developing world can reasonably expect to benefit from this Northern social investment in available technologies and people's skills, it is clearly the case that similar forms of strategic investment will be required in the South. And this investment will need to be "patient" in the purely commercial returns that can be expected.



In Figure 2<sup>9</sup> above, we see that the penetration of Internet use on a geographic, and continental basis is highly varied. Internet use is only one indicator of what has come to be called the "digital divide."<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, it does reflect considerable variation in the penetration of

<sup>8</sup> Lester Thurow, Economic Community and Social Investment, in *The Community of the Future*, 1998, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> While the log frame in Figure 2 is an insufficient graphical device, the raw data from the ITU was unavailable within the published source. See Goldstein, A. and O'Connor, D. "E-Commerce for Development: Prospects and Policy Issues. OECD. September 2000.

<sup>10</sup> The Director of ICT4D serves on the Steering Committee for a project led by UNESCO's Orbicom to develop a more inclusive and relevant set of "Digital Divide Indicators."

Internet users within the three regions where our ICT4D program initiatives operate. We believe that this variation both reflects and underscores the need for special regional approaches that include dimensions of geography and place.

We understand Acacia to be operating within an African context that is essentially “Pre-E’-Market.” By this, we mean that access to digital technologies, including the Internet, remains largely the domain of elite segments of the society and economy. In most African cases, excepting South Africa and Egypt where more than 75% of African Internet users can be found, the Internet market is a largely expatriate one. The local domestic market, if it exists at all, is principally oriented toward expatriate institutions, is expensive and divides, rather than integrates, the local society and economy. As presently formed, it does not build diversity but instead institutionalizes cultural hegemony.

In the Acacia and Africa circumstance, we would argue that our programming has to be at both the “front” and the “back” of the “E”-market. By “front” of the market, we mean that the policy apparatus in participating countries continues to need awareness-building, as well as pro-poor and pro-rural policy and technical assistance, along with support to the champions of horizontal market policies within participating countries. At the same time, Acacia needs to be active at the “back” of the market, working in collaboration with local, regional and national institutions. This kind of activity will spread the impact of the technologies,<sup>11</sup> focusing on real poverty reduction circumstances and, in the end, helping to create the horizontal “diffusion effect” that will, in fact, build the diversity that ICTs can engender.

With few exceptions, the “E-market” circumstances within which ICTs are deployed for development in the Americas are very different. PAN Americas works in an environment that we refer to as a “dual E-Market.” National and domestic markets in the capitals and major cities of Latin America and the Caribbean have all developed.<sup>12</sup> The principal development challenge now lies in the rural areas and marginal urban communities that daily confront material poverty. Add to this the fact that the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas will focus on educational, government and business markets, and it is even easier to understand the case for PAN Americas to deepen and expand its focus on civil society responses to digital inequality of access in rural and marginalized urban areas .

The Asian circumstance is different again. Indochina and East and South Asia very much share the African situation. There is little Internet or digital development there at all. As with the Acacia strategy, approaches are needed at both the policy and the applied demonstration level. At the same time, there are major technology engines in the region (e.g., Taiwan, Korea, Japan) and within particular countries (e.g. Bangalore, India). The specific ICT4D development challenge in Asia needs to include promoting integration of both the least *and* the most capable elements in

---

<sup>11</sup> For example, see an early work prepared for IDRC on this subject by Richard Fuchs, “If you have a lemon, make lemonade: Guidelines for the Establishment of African Multi-Purpose, Community Telecentres, (Ottawa: IDRC), September 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Haiti would be an obvious exception to this “at the back of the market,” as would the Bahamas at the “front” of the “dual” e-markets.

the Asian community. Moreover, those countries that most require social investment (e.g., Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, et. al.) to become participants in the Information Economy also require continued applied research support.

The ICT4D strategy is based on the geographic realities in which our research partners live and work and includes explicit rationales for how we respond to this diversity within a global framework of research themes and objectives.

#### *Milestones since March 2001*

Included within the approved ICT4D submission to the Board of Governors in March 2001 were milestones to be pursued in 2001/2002. We restate these milestones (*in italics*) as approved by the Board of Governors to report upon our progress, as follows:

- *Completing a strategic focus for Acacia II. A meeting of Acacia staff has been planned for late April 2001 for this purpose.*

The Acacia staff met for a week-long Strategic Planning and Vision/Mission development session in West Africa in May. The event was a considerable success. This is especially so given that, one month earlier, the Acacia staff complement had been reduced by more than 50%. The Team Leader for PAN and a Partnerships and Business Development Division staff representative also contributed to and participated in this planning and vision development session. A copy of the Evaluation Report of that event is available upon request.

- *Developing a planned financial and program pipeline for fiscal year 2001/2002.*

A Workplan and Financial Pipeline have been completed for 2001/02. The Acacia workplan for this period was considered to be among the most detailed and well developed within the Centre. A detailed workplan was also completed and approved this year for PAN.

- *Preparing project specific “exit”<sup>13</sup> strategies for telecentre and schoolnet initiatives within Acacia.*

The “Exit” strategies have been changed to “transition” strategies. They have been developed for the telecentres projects, school networking and the National Acacia Advisory Committees (NAACs). The strategies are included in the Acacia II prospectus.

---

<sup>13</sup> “Exit” in this context does not suggest that the projects will be “dropped.” Rather, Acacia will work with the local partners and ICT practitioners to find ways to support the existing or revised projects as sustainable long-term activities.

- *Developing and finding funding partners for the “Acacia Papers” publications series that will incorporate different forms of print and web media. A proposal to assist with this will be developed for submission to the World Bank’s Global Development Gateway.*

The proposal has been submitted to the Development Gateway and the Partnerships, and the Business Development Division is pursuing further channels of collaboration

Partnership funding (RX) in the amount of US\$40K has been received from the World Bank Institute to produce two digital video documentaries on telecentre activities in Uganda and Senegal, both Acacia “strategy” countries.

- *Developing a regional Southern African approach for ACACIA II, a regional approach that has already been discussed with the South African NAAC.*

This is currently in development and is in the Acacia II prospectus. The Chair of the South African NAAC has accepted this regional approach.

- *Developing a South African institutional home for Southern African regional Acacia program.*

Negotiations have been concluded with the Development Bank of Southern Africa to host and co-sponsor the Acacia PI in that region. An exchange of letters has been completed between the President of IDRC and the President of DBSA. Live negotiations on this matter, involving the Director of ICT4D and the IDRC Corporate Counsel, were held in Johannesburg on October 2nd.

- *Developing transition strategies for the NAACs and country foci in Mozambique, Uganda and Senegal.*

These transition strategies have been developed in each Acacia country (see the Acacia Prospectus for further details.)

- *Completing negotiations with UNESCO, IDRC, ACOA, NRC and CIDA on an agreement for sub-Saharan ICT technology transfers, institutional exchanges and telecoms observatoire.*

These discussions have commenced with National Research Council, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and UNESCO. Further discussions with CIDA are forthcoming. The initial investment to launch a West African Telecoms Observatoire (IMPACT Africa) has been completed, SCAN ICT has hired a Project Coordinator and both programs have been launched. The European Union will also be involved in this initiative.

- *Concluding an agreement with WorldLinks for Development and Hewlett Packard for resourcing SchoolNets in Mozambique, Uganda, Senegal and South Africa.*

Working with the Partnerships and Business Development Division, extensive discussions have resulted in a Hewlett Packard consideration of investment in the Uganda CurriculumNet project. The changes in the market performance of the IT sector have, however, dampened the enthusiasm of private sector partners for these types of initiatives. Hopefully, this is a temporary occurrence.

- *Working with Development Partners to link and to network ICT practitioners in each of the Acacia countries.*

This work is in the Acacia pipeline but not yet started. Planned launch date is a conference in May 2002.

- *Developing information and communications re: alternative wireless connectivity and bandwidth technologies with ACACIA and related ICT practitioners.*

A sample initiative, developed at Centre Songhai in Porto Novo, Benin, is in the Acacia pipeline for 2001/2002.

- *Completing a prospectus for submission to the Board of Governors by the Fall of 2001.*

Prospectuses for Acacia II and PAN Asia have been completed and submitted. A detailed proposal for the new Corporate Project, PAN Americas, has also been completed.

- *Integrating work within DOTForce, Global Knowledge and partnership development activities with future ACACIA approaches.*

This work is ongoing and the milestone events include President and Director participation in the World Economic Forum Digital Divide Supervisory Committee, presentations to Global Business Development for Enterprise presentation in Montreal and participation in World Economic Forum Regional Workshop in Durban, South Africa.

## **2. Review of Current Activities**

### **2.1 Program Initiatives**

As separate prospectuses have been submitted to the Board of Governors for Acacia II and PAN Asia they will not receive detailed treatment within this introductory and context report. The SMC has approved the Programs and Partnership Branch proposal to manage ICT4D activities in the Americas as a corporate project on a “twinned” basis while the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas is established. This report will focus on Secretariats and Corporate Projects, including PAN Americas, not referenced in the prospectuses before the Board of Governors.

### **2.2 Secretariats**

#### **2.2.1 Bellanet**

Located at IDRC headquarters in Ottawa, the Bellanet Secretariat plays an important role internationally, helping development partners to work together more effectively, especially using ICTs. Bellanet develops its program in consultation with an international Steering Committee composed of representatives of Bellanet donors, including of course IDRC, along with CIDA, DANIDA and SIDA. Bellanet currently has 11 full-time staff and 3 interns from the University of Waterloo. Its annual operating budget is \$1.4 million, of which IDRC contributes \$400,000 per year.

The DPA is a member of the Bellanet Steering Committee and regularly interacts with the Executive Director and staff of Bellanet. These interactions have included working closely with Bellanet in hosting workspaces for and supporting the DotForce Canadian advisory committee and the civil society consultation process.

In 2000 a Bellanet team strategy process resulted in the articulation of Bellanet’s program in terms of five “Service Lines”, a reflection of the fact that Bellanet is a demand-driven operation that is committed to responding efficiently to real needs expressed by development partners. The Service Lines are building blocks for successful collaboration using ICTs. Thus the services are designed to support collaboration by promoting: **equitable access** to information and communication resources and forums; open **dialogue** among development partners, South and North; increased commitment to **sustainable information sharing**, and tools that make it easier to share information; better **ICT programming strategies**; and ongoing **organizational learning**.

Highlights of Bellanet’s current Activities include:

- In the Organizational Learning Service Line, Bellanet is exploring applications of Knowledge Management (KM) for greater effectiveness in development organizations. KM is a suite of management, ICT, and learning approaches designed to help

organizations adapt to the increasing pace of change. Bellanet is helping UNDP develop a KM strategy, and has organized two successful KM workshops with the donor community. A Southern KM program of work is being implemented, beginning with a KM workshop for Southern organizations and networks in September 2001 at the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation in India.

- *itrainonline.org*, a collaborative Internet/ICT training portal, is being built by Bellanet and 5 leading ICT4D organizations including the Association for Progressive Communications and Oneworld, a British counterpart to Bellanet.
- Bellanet provides online “workspaces” and facilitation for multiple research and development communities, many of which involve IDRC PIs, including, in connection with its Learning and Evaluation Action Program (LEAP), two evaluation-oriented research teams from the ICT4D program area.
- Working with CCIM, Bellanet played a lead role in the development of IDRC’s Corporate Information System Strategic Plan.
- Bellanet generated \$600,000 in revenue from contracts and jointly funded activities in the past year, in addition to the core funding from Bellanet financial partners.
- One-person “virtual offices” in developing countries are planned for 2002/2003.

## Impacts

- Bellanet was recognized for its positive role in the debate over the Development Gateway, a controversial web portal initiative of the World Bank. By supporting dialogue and collaboration, and through direct advice, Bellanet influenced the Gateway strategy and made major progress in the development of a consensus-based technical standard for the exchange of development information: the International Development Markup Language (IDML).
- Bellanet supported the development of the Danish government’s position on ICT Programming as documented in *Information and Communication Technology in Danish Development Assistance: Working Paper*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 2000.
- Bellanet offers a strategic perspective in discussions with the major Canadian government organizations involved in supporting the use of ICTs for development: IDRC, CIDA, DFAIT, and Industry Canada.
- ITrain is one of 6 projects identified as “best practice” by the Education Steering Committee of the World Economic Forum’s Digital Divide Initiative. It is being profiled by the WEF throughout the year with a view to “scaling up.”

Discussions are currently underway with Bellanet to provide more integrated services to both Acacia and PAN Asia. Bellanet will, as well, become an integrated element of the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas.

## **2.3 Corporate Projects**

### **2.3.1 G8 DotForce**

The DPA for ICT4D serves as the “sherpa” to the President of IDRC in her role as the Canadian Co-Chair (Not-for-Profit Sector) to the G8’s Digital Opportunities Task Force (DotForce). The DotForce originated at the G8 first ministers’ meetings in Okinawa in 2000 and has held subsequent meetings in Tokyo, Cape Town, Siena and, most recently, Genoa. In 2002 the G8 will be chaired by Canada and Prime Minister Chrétien. This will likely elevate the “visibility” of the ICT4D issue in Canada and of IDRC’s history of involvement with ICTs as well.

IDRC contributed substantially to the DotForce. ICT4D was responsible for coordinating and drafting the combined brief and submission to the DotForce Secretariat on behalf of all the Not-for-Profit Co-Chairs from Germany, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan and Russia. As well, IDRC coordinated, drafted and transmitted a letter to the G8 members indicating the support by civil society for the DotForce and its Genoa Action Plan. We are informed that this letter, which was the first one received by the G8 and was signed by all the Not-for-Profit Co-Chairs, had immediate and positive impacts on the final treatment of the DotForce report by the G8 First Ministers.

Along with the foregoing, ICT4D participated actively in the Canadian Advisory Committee consultation process, the DPA was interviewed for broadcast on CTV national news and a regional “digital desk” television program in British Columbia and wrote an OpEd piece for national newspapers.

In the immediate future ICT4D@IDRC will:

- organize an “Overcoming the Digital Divide” Panel at the Wireless Vision Congress in St. John’s (September 26-28) with Maureen O’Neil as Panel Moderator and 3 IDRC partners from Mozambique, Costa Rica and Bangladesh as presenters.
- host a “Business Opportunities in the Digital Divide” keynote speaker (Patrick Masombu, Uganda Communications Commission) and 3 panelists at the annual Bay BYTES: Rural Technology Forum in Port Blandford, Newfoundland (Sept. 23-26) to be webcast on the Internet.



- participate in the first meeting of the DotForce since Genoa to be held in Montreal on October 9th and subsequently in Rome in December 2001.

IDRC has been approached by Industry Canada to consider serving as the Chair of a G8 working group to report in June 2002 on the issue of *Access and Connectivity*, one of the nine (9) Actions emanating from the G8 Genoa Action Plan. As well, ICT4D has collaborated with the Health, Governance and Equity Corporate Project to investigate the response of the Canadian HIV/AIDs community to the use of ICTs in addressing the pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. This was another item emanating from the G8 meetings in Genoa and IDRC has been recruited to play this role by both UNDP and the Markle Foundation.

In a related G8 outcome, IDRC will seek a meeting with Robert Fowler, the Canadian sherpa for the G8's special response to development challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, to investigate mechanisms through which the Centre can assist in Canada's response to this new initiative. ICT4D programming will in Acacia be included in these discussions.

The DotForce, and Canada's Presidency of the G8 in 2002, represents a unique opportunity for significantly elevating public awareness and discussion on the issue of the digital divide at the same time as it presents unique RX opportunities for IDRC generally. In the short-term, Canada's Presidency of the G8 will serve as the principal lever for our involvement. In the longer term, the UN ICT Task Force, which was announced in New York in September, and the International Telecommunications Union World Congress on the Digital Divide in Geneva in 2003 will be mechanisms for the promulgation of the Centre's research results and the Centre's programs generally.

### **2.3.2 Institute for Connectivity in the Americas**

The Institute for Connectivity in the Americas was announced by the Prime Minister as a 4 year/\$20 million program to be administered by ICT4D@IDRC. It has taken several months to clarify the financial arrangements through which these funds would be transferred to IDRC.

An initial \$250,000 tranche has been approved for disbursement before the end of the calendar year. The official transfer of funds will occur in December 2001. In the interim ICT4D has:

- undertaken the recruitment of a Network Coordinator for ICA.
- commenced a process for identification and selection of candidates to serve on the Hemispheric Advisory Board (HAB) of ICA.
- received approval for the ICA Program Outline approach from the founding Canadian Stakeholder Partners DFAIT, Industry Canada, CIDA and IDRC.
- compiled a draft project pipeline for the consideration of the HAB for review and recommended approval in early 2002.

In September, the LACRO Regional Director made a presentation on the ICA to the Organization of American States meetings of Minister's of Education in Punte del Este, Uruguay. A special presentation is also scheduled to the *Summit Implementation Responsibility Group* in Washington DC in late October 2001.

The Institute for Connectivity in the Americas will place considerable time-pressure on the staff of ICT4D and especially upon the Director. This is especially true in the first two (2) years of the initiative. Canada, and IDRC, will be expected to demonstrate major accomplishments from the ICA at the next Summit of the Americas in 2005.

### **2.3.3 PAN Americas**

PAN—originally coined from the PAN Asia Networking Program—was formally launched in 1995. Its first prospectus, approved in the October 1997, was framed around the following objectives, which were in turn drawn from the broad consultation carried on in 1994:

- connectivity infrastructure;
- content development;
- communication and networking; and
- collaborative research on ICTs and policies.

In 1997, PAN initiated a program in Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing mostly on supporting and strengthening the research capacity of civil society organizations to take advantage of ICT resources available in the region and to promote more meaningful uses of ICTs for development.

The LAC region is quite different from Asia (and sub-Saharan Africa, where Acacia operates). In LAC, there are numerous and comparatively strong civil society organizations playing important roles in a context of democratization and modernization of the nations. In this context, PAN Americas has taken into consideration the region's relatively elaborate, yet highly inequitable, Internet and connectivity infrastructure. Its programming is focused on strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to make better use of ICT resources, promoting collaborative research and evaluation on the social impact of ICTs and encouraging the use of research results to inform and influence policy-making in particular contexts. Among other accomplishments, PAN has encouraged a network approach for collaborative action that has further explored innovative approaches to telecentre implementation, the use of ICTs in education, social movements, peace-building and capacity development.

During 2000, PAN Americas launched a regional dialogue and consultation that resulted in strong networking and exchange among partners. As a result of this process, over 40 papers and publications describing progress, lessons and findings of the ongoing work were distributed at the end of 2000, and over a dozen presentations were made at different conferences, including a public panel presentation at IDRC at the end of September 2000. Following this process, and as part of a Closing the Loop activity, PAN Americas prepared and published a short synthesis document, "**Internet... why? And what for?**" The document was distributed in English, French

and Spanish, both electronically ([www.idrc.ca/pan/pppp](http://www.idrc.ca/pan/pppp)) and in print, and it was publicly launched at the Organization of America's States Summit in Quebec, April 2001. Together with other results of supported research and action projects, this document crystallizes the lessons and key concepts resulting from IDRC's work in ICT4D in LAC and serves as the conceptual framework for the work to come.

The functioning of an effective network of over 50 partners actively working and doing research on ICTs for human development in the region (see [www.idrc.ca/pan/partners](http://www.idrc.ca/pan/partners) for a full list) is PAN Americas' strongest asset. This is a vibrant community that shares a common interest and enthusiasm for the use of ICTs for human development, that believes in collaborative action and shared learning and that plays a support role building on each other's strengths and capacities for reflection and action. Our partners are focusing on marginalized peoples' development and on constructive criticism guided by good practices to effect the ICT programs for development. They have a growing influence on the definition, monitoring and analysis of local, national, regional and international ICT policy activity.

This move is especially critical in view of the latest addition to the IDRC portfolio of activities on ICTs: the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas, recently announced at the OAS Summit. To be initially hosted and incubated at IDRC, the Institute—informed and supported by PAN Americas' research programming—will be in a position to strengthen ICT4D interventions in the Americas. Strengthening and enriching the relationship with PAN's network of partners in the region is the key for the success of the PAN Americas PI, and for IDRC's contribution to the ICA.

#### **2.3.4 World Economic Forum-Digital Divide Supervisory Committee**

Through IDRC's participation in the DotForce, and due to our agency's longstanding work with ICT4D, Maureen O'Neil was appointed Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum's Digital Divide Supervisory Committee. The DPA's job in this context is to support the President's participation in the WEF's education, entrepreneurship and policy sub-committees. This involves both live and audio-conference meetings and report preparation.

### **3. Corporate Learning-Closing the Loop**

ICT4D has had important impacts on public policy decision-making in many ways. These include:

- Acacia's "country" focus has had important impacts on the adoption of ICTs as a central element in national social and economic development policy in all four (4) "strategy" countries. These will be documented in a formal "Closing the Loop" research and documentation report in 2001/02. On October 3 and 4, the Government of Mozambique will publicly announce its new approach to ICTs in an *International Symposium on ICT Policy Implementation Strategy*. This is a direct outcome of the Acacia "strategy" country approach and programming.

As well, the Uganda Communications Commission credits Acacia and IDRC with having assisted in the development of its rural “offset” wireless telecoms policy.

Active community participation in the Republic of South Africa’s recent (Jan.-Feb. 2001) review of current rural cellular “offset” policies is directly attributable to Acacia and IDRC’s diffusion impacts through both its telecentre and its partnership activities with the Universal Service Agency, Wits University and others.

- PAN Americas completed a successful “Closing the Loop” project in early 2001/2002. The report from this project was submitted to the Summit of the Americas (both inside and outside the gates!) in Quebec City in April 2001 and Minister Manley participated in a major IDRC activity in Costa Rica during the meeting there of the Organization of America States.
- PAN Asia has very clearly had impacts on the knowledge and understanding of the Internet and its implications, especially within Vietnam, Laos and Mongolia. For example, the Laotian government will be releasing its new pro-poor and pro-rural telecoms policy in Fall 2001. PAN Asia is credited with having assisted the Laotian Government reach this approach through IDRC’s involvement with the start-up of LaoNet. Formal documentation of these “Closing the Loop” impacts is planned. In 2002 IDRC’s PAN Asia will receive an award for having assisted in the establishment of the Multi-Lingual Internet Naming Convention (MINC). This important initiative, which was supported through the PAN Asia small-grants program, prevents companies in the developed world from “cyber-squatting” by registering domain names in national languages and then re-selling them to the countries when they try to enact registration themselves.
- As already referenced, IDRC’s participation in the DotForce assisted in promoting the continued focus on pro-poor and pro-gender issues both through coordinating the Not-for-Profit (NPO) organizations’ joint brief to the DotForce and by organizing the NPO joint letter campaign to G8 sherpas.

#### **4. Conclusion-The Way Forward**

The longstanding IDRC role as an innovator in the area of ICT4D’s will receive more support and, concomitantly, will come under far greater scrutiny in the next 4 years. In previous years, IDRC was often in a small minority of organizations that included information and related technologies as a component of their development programming. With the DotForce and other related initiatives, many other organizations are adopting this approach. Accordingly, IDRC is being expected to play an even greater partnership role within the international community as more organizations are entering the field and gaining experience in this sector.

IDRC cannot afford to rest on its laurels. Its ICT4D programs need to move into a new generation of applied research and demonstration. As well, our regional programs need to reflect genuine diversity but on an integrated global scale.

We have, accordingly, proposed renewed programming directions for Acacia II and PAN Asia as second-generation Program Initiatives within the Centre in the prospectuses which are under consideration by the Board. Additionally, we are establishing PAN Americas as a Corporate Project, rather than a Program Initiative. This is being done to “twin” the IDRC programming in the Americas with the ICA. After the four (4) year life of the ICA a decision will be made whether to merge PAN Americas with the ICA.

It is important to note that all of the staff involved with the ICT4D Program Initiatives have been actively involved in the development of the prospectuses which have been submitted as well as with the development of this DPA Program and Context Report.

Our future goals within the Program Area include:

- to build the management and program teams of Acacia, PAN Asia, PAN Americas and ICA such that there is greater delegated leadership and regional relevance.
- to involve ICT4D management and staff in the numerous global (e.g. DotForce) and regional (e.g. ICA) such that our regional programming, staff and partners contribute to the development of these initiatives.
- to move away from the “awareness” raising elements of our regional programs now that so many developing countries and international agencies have come to adopt ICTs as a new form of orthodoxy in international development. Increasingly, the ICT4D research needs to move to identifying how developing countries can benefit from these technologies and their outputs and to using research to foster pro-poor and pro-rural policies and outcomes.
- to build the link between ICT4D activities with the work of other Program Initiatives at IDRC.
- to develop common vision and program direction with each Regional Director through regional visits by the DPA and active involvement by the Regional Offices in the development of annual Acacia, PAN Asia and ICA/PAN Americas workplans.
- to capitalize upon the “visibility” of the ICT4D issue in the international community to galvanize support for IDRC programming through active partnership and resource expansion activities. In less than 12 months, and with the capable assistance of the Partnership and Business Development Division, ICT4D has generated new RX through the ICA, the World Bank Institute (\$40K US-Acacia), the International Telecommunications Union (\$60K US-PAN Asia) and the United Nations Foundation (\$250K US-PAN Asia).

## Acacia

<b>Team Leader</b> Edith Adera	<b>Approved Budget</b> 2001-2002: \$4,400,000	<b>Full-time Equivalents:</b> 4.50
-----------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

Type	Name	Discipline	Time allocated	Location
Team Leader	Edith Adera	Agricultural Economics	100%	ESARO
Program Officer	Shafika Isaacs	Science and Tech. Policy	100%	J'burg
Research Officer	Luis Barnola	Adult Edu/Particip. Research	50%	Ottawa
Program Officer	Alioune Camara	Public Law	100%	WARO
Program Officer	Vacant		100%	ESARO

**Project Profile: Uganda Curriculum Development Program: Technology Integration in Primary and Secondary School Curriculum**

IDRC Funding: CAD\$446,800

Responsible Officer: Edith Adera

Indigenous languages are seldom bridged in the digital divide. However, at the Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre, <http://www.ncdc.go.ug>, they are changing all this. They are converting several primary and elementary school courses into the local language and redesigning them on Information Technology platforms to be used on CD-ROM and eventually on the Internet. Under the program, an Information, Communication and Technology based curriculum development hub has been established at the recipient institution and linked to three rural schools each at the primary and secondary levels. Through this, the empowerment of students, educators and educational administrators to develop appropriate competencies to use ICTs effectively in teaching and learning is being greatly enhanced.

The program is expected to improve the capacity of the education system to cope with large numbers of children, especially at the primary level. It is also targeted at improving quality, equity and access to education. Equipped with adequate computer skills and curriculum integration techniques, teachers are being enabled to enhance their instructional delivery skills and gain access to inexhaustible reference materials from the Internet. Further, the project is enabling teachers to collaborate with their colleagues in other parts of the world. Similarly, learners will develop personal knowledge and skills of problem-solving, information gathering and interpretation. They will also collaborate and share information much faster.

Supported primarily by IDRC, the program is being undertaken jointly with the Canadian Open Learning and Information Network and Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports. Besides these, there are other organizations involved in projects that are aimed at bridging the digital divide in Uganda. These include World Links for Development that has helped to convert school laboratories into telecentres and brought in new satellite technologies. Also involved is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization which has supported telecentres and championed the first African telecentre in Nakaseke, Uganda in partnership with IDRC. Indeed, as the head of IDRC's Acacia Program in Africa, Edith Adera, says: "There's no such thing as working alone anymore. It's all about partnerships locally, nationally and internationally. It's a networked economy and it's high time the agencies networked to support smart local initiatives like the Uganda Curriculum Development program."

**Pan Networking (PAN)**

<b>Team Leader</b> Renald Lafond	<b>Approved Budget</b> 2001-2002: \$3,000,000	<b>Full-time Equivalents:</b> 4.50
-------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

Type	Name	Discipline	Time allocated	Location
Team Leader	Renald Lafond	Chemical Engineering	100%	Ottawa
Program Officer	Maria Ng	IC Sciences/ICTs	100%	Ottawa
Program Officer	Zbigniew Mikolajuk	CompScience/Economics	100%	Ottawa
Program Officer	Vivien Chiam	Business Administration	50%	ASRO
Program Officer	Nancy Smyth	Int'al Conflict Resolution	50%	Ottawa
Research Officer	Luis Barnola	Adult Edu/Partic. Research	50%	Ottawa

Note: R. Gomez, G. Cliche and A. Richero will now work with the PAN Americas Corporate Project (were previously with the PAN PI).

**Project Profile: Internet Access and Effective Use by Third Sector Organizations in Brazil**

IDRC Funding: CAD\$163,000

Responsible officer: Gilles Cliche

Although Brazil has the largest telecommunications infrastructure in Latin America, few people have individual access to the Internet and less than 7% of the cities and towns have local dial-up access to the Internet. The Internet service providers are mostly to be found in large urban centers.

Supporting a process for finding viable solutions for equitable dissemination of ICT and Internet, this project addresses the issue of the digital divide and helps NGOs and their networks to improve the efficiency and quality of their activities. The project feeds into the process of formulating a Brazilian federal Information Society Program and supports the growing interest of ICT issues among policy makers.

The general objective is to address and contribute to formulating and carrying out solutions to democratize access to ICT in Brazil, with a focus on third sector organizations, their networks and constituencies. The project's specific objectives are: (1) to research and implement solutions contributing to extensive, affordable and well distributed access to the Internet; (2) to train and disseminate information to enable effective use of the medium, particularly as regards knowledge management and dissemination; and (3) to initiate actions to influence in policy making regarding ICT, through events (seminars, conferences, workshops), press releases, media articles, participation in policy formulation working groups and other activities.



The implementing institution RITS (Rede de Informações para o Terceiro Setor) has made an effort to participate in many different initiatives in Brazil, to influence strategies and to build new proposals while avoiding a reinvention of the wheel in isolation from a near- explosive acceleration of actions to radically change the current situation of info-exclusion in the country. In field research, RITS has continued its critical monitoring and regular evaluation of connectivity and universal access in Brazil, and has worked to consolidate a database of nearly 70,000 third sector organizations from which a sample was randomly selected for a survey. In experimentation, RITS has carried out a prospection of potential partners to develop community access initiatives, and has established a partnership with the Florestan Fernandes Institute in Sao Paulo for actively participating in the development of a network of telecenters in poorer areas of the city. In dissemination, RITS has advanced the implementation of its "Citizenship on the Internet" Portal, which is to become the basis for information dissemination on third sector issues operated by RITS in partnership with its members and sponsors. The portal is now running experimentally since the beginning of June 2001. It has also established a new technology for its online information magazine. In training, RITS has developed partnerships with the Kellogg Foundation, the Brazilian NGO Association (Abong) and the Brazilian Association of Leadership Training (ABDL) to develop content and distant education systems targeted to third sector organizations and the common citizen, with focus on target groups and organizations in the Northeast. Finally in policy making (conferences, workshops etc), RITS has gone much deeper in its involvement with the Information Society Program (Socinfo), the E-Gov and Digital Inclusion initiative of the federal government, and the strategies for developing digital inclusion projects with financial resources from the Telecommunications Services Universalization Fund (FUST).

## Bellanet

<b>Executive Director</b> David Balson	<b>Current IDRC funding (2001-02 and 2002-03)</b> \$800,000	<b>Total IDRC funding to date</b> \$2,330,975	<b>Total Co-funding to date</b> \$3,599,028
---	--	--	--

### 1. Relevance

Bellanet's work is becoming more relevant as there is increasing international recognition of and interest in development partnerships, collaborative approaches, and the use of ICTs in support of such activities. Bellanet strives to be responsive by shifting emphasis where appropriate and feasible. Some of these changes include provision of *more direct* support to funding members for the development of their capacity to use ICTs for collaborative work. In line with the original long-term plans, Bellanet is now working directly with developing country organizations instead of exclusively with donors or donor partnerships.

### 2. Links to IDRC Programming

Bellanet has extensive linkages with many IDRC programs and activities, in terms of providing input, advice, and technical assistance to several projects, other Secretariats (IMFNS, MI) and Program Initiatives (MINGA, ACACIA, PAN, PBR, SUB). In some of these activities, Bellanet played a central role in concept development and in the provision of ICT policy advice - either as an active participant, or in response to specific requests.

Bellanet has worked with IDRC continually to improve its use of the electronic venue as a collaborative workspace. It has pioneered ICT applications in a concrete setting, eg., the use of dynamic web-based databases. With Uganisha, Bellanet has partnered on web-to-email gateway work and on the production and dissemination of publications. Bellanet is now leading an exploration of the applicability of a development markup language. Bellanet is collaborating with the Evaluation Unit on its approach to the evaluation of ICT-enhanced projects and activities, and is working with ACIM on the elaboration of knowledge management strategies.

### 3. Future Directions

Over the next few years, Bellanet will move to a situation where approximately fifty percent of its efforts will be on "Northern" donor partnerships and direct involvement with its funding members; approximately fifty percent of its efforts will involve developing country based initiatives; Bellanet will have an expanded physical presence in Europe and perhaps in the South; a variety of strategic partnerships will have been developed to meet the increasing demands; and an increasing amount of financial support will be coming in the form of targeted contributions and contracts.

**Digital Opportunity Task Force (Dot Force)**

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Current IDRC funding</b>	<b>Total IDRC funding to date - 0</b>	<b>Approximate Co-funding to date - N/A</b>
Richard Fuchs	0		

**1. Relevance**

"The benefits of ICTs - among others, knowledge, growth, and productivity - are not available equally to developed and developing countries. From postal systems and radio to the Internet and wireless telephony, ICTs are ubiquitous in economic activity and daily life in developed countries, and have arguably augmented productivity and growth. Their benefits, however, have not been spread widely through the developing world. Tackling this "digital divide" has become a priority of many governments, international organizations, and civil society groups. There are, for example, at least 40 distinct initiatives stemming from international organizations alone.

The G-8 Dot.Force was struck in mid-2000 in response to the lack of a coordinated approach to enhancing ICT capacity in the developing world. The G-8 Dot.Force will identify areas of sustainable long-term interest in ICT development, and will pinpoint policy priorities that would create wealth, facilitate sustainable development, and reduce poverty. The G-8 Dot.Force mandate includes providing recommendations on means of enhancing coherence among global efforts to bridge the digital divide, as well as methods for raising global awareness and mobilizing resources in support of ICT development efforts." [G8 Dot Force Advisory Committee]

**2. Links to IDRC Programming**

IDRC has been a pioneer in the integration of ICTs and social and economic development in the developing world. The priorities of the Dot Force:

- Fostering policy, regulatory and network readiness
- Improving connectivity, increasing access and lowering cost
- Building human capacity
- Encouraging participation in global e-commerce networks

are thus very much in line with the ongoing work of IDRC's Information and Communication Technologies for Development program area. Both the PAN and Acacia PIs focus on a variety of themes matching those of the Dot Force: ICTs and People Development, ICTs and Developing World Economic Opportunities, ICTs and Networking, to name a few.

### Institute for Connectivity in the Americas

<b>Responsible Officer</b> R. Fuchs	<b>Current IDRC funding</b> PAN-related program and operations at roughly \$ 1.6M/annum	<b>Total IDRC funding to date</b> N/A	<b>Approximate Co-funding to date</b> \$20M over four years
--	--	--	--

#### 1. Relevance

The Institute for Connectivity in the Americas is directly relevant to the new ICT4D Program Area in IDRC as well as the longstanding (since 1996) PAN-Americas programming in the hemisphere. The decision by the Government of Canada to locate the Institute at IDRC is a testament to the ascendance of IDRC's reputation for work in this area in the developing world.

#### 2. Links to IDRC Programming

The IDRC investment in PAN-Americas will be directly linked to the more project-focussed and programmatic ICA activities. Indeed, PAN-Americas will serve as the Applied Research and Learning program of the ICA.

#### 3. Future Directions

The Institute for Connectivity in the Americas will represent a major investment of human, financial and organizational resources by IDRC. It will become a "flag-ship" Canadian program potentially emulated by many other bilateral and multilateral agencies. As Canada's Presidency of the G8 comes to fruition in 2002, there is the likelihood of similar proposals for Africa and Asia. The ICA has already placed additional demands on the management and staff of ICT4D. This pressure will only increase in the future.

**World Economic Forum-Digital Divide Supervisory Committee**

<b>Responsible Officer</b> Maureen O'Neil with support from Richard Fuchs	<b>Current IDRC funding</b> N/A	<b>Total IDRC funding to date</b> N/A	<b>Approximate Co-funding to date</b> N/A
--	--	--	--

**1. Relevance**

This new role for the President as NPO Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Supervisory Committee on the Digital Divide is directly relevant to IDRC's 30 year history in Information Sciences. It is even more relevant to the new directions which IDRC has taken with its new Information and Communications Technology for Development Program Area and the support role it has provided to the President with the DotForce. The World Economic Forum Digital Divide Supervisory Committee provides an excellent networking and program integration channel for IDRC, especially with the private sector engagement in this process.

**2. Links to IDRC Programming**

The links to IDRC programming include the Acacia program in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas and the PAN Asia and Americas programs.

**3. Future Directions**

While support to the President's new role as NPO Co-Chair of the WEF Supervisory Committee on the DotForce is currently being handled by the Director of the ICT4D Program Area, this will be gradually delegated to the Senior Program Officer position within the program area. It is not anticipated that this will create onerous demands on time and/or resources.

### Learning and Evaluation Action Program (LEAP)

<b>Responsible Officer</b> Nancy Smyth	<b>Current IDRC funding</b> \$200,000	<b>Total IDRC funding to date</b> \$35,000	<b>Approximate Co-funding to date</b> 0
---	--	---	--

#### 1. Relevance

IDRC and its Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) partners are at the forefront of the field of information and communications technology (ICTs) for development, and are conscious of the potential impact that skyrocketing investments in ICTs can have on all sectors. The development community has begun responding to these forces but does not have the coherent basis for decision making informed by experience and accumulated knowledge.

The Learning and Evaluation Action Program (LEAP), initiated by IDRC and Bellanet within the GKP context (and a continuation of Global Knowledge II: Building Knowledge Societies), is a collective response to these concerns and an initiative to promote a coordinated and comprehensive learning culture in the development community. This means development organizations that learn from their own activities as well as activities of other stakeholders, and that better understand the role played by information, knowledge and ICTs in development. In 2000-01, IDRC launched the LEAP initiative with work on baseline studies, testing of evaluation frameworks, a "Launch" workshop and the development of online resources.

#### 2. Links to IDRC Programming

The LEAP project is a part of the Centre's Information and Communication Technologies for Development program area, with links to the Bellanet Secretariat, as well as to the PAN and Acacia PIs.

#### 3. Future Directions

For 2001-02, LEAP proposes to encourage and strengthen learning and evaluation linkages both among IDRC's ICT efforts (PAN, Acacia, Bellanet, and others within non-ICT PIs) as well as between IDRC's ICT efforts and those of other partners, South and North. Activities which LEAP will undertake during 2001-02 include: workshops in each region promoting the development of capacity among southern stakeholders around learning and evaluation efforts; annual reports reviewing and updating the state of the art in learning about the use of ICTs in development; ongoing support for the application of evaluation frameworks for IDRC supported projects; joint evaluations across ICT PIs; further development of the common LEAP web resource; and the encouragement of interaction between otherwise isolated organizational efforts at learning about ICT activities. This latter interaction might take the form of joint evaluations, the representation of partners as stakeholders in specific evaluation and learning efforts, and the fostering of a community of practice among interested individuals.